liquor tragedy. I also request the Government of India to give some financial assistance from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to the affected persons. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI NIHAL CHAND CHAUHAN (Sri Ganganagar): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for providing me an opportunity to raise the issue of millions of farmers. The farmers of Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and other parts of country are not getting reasonable price for their cotton crops. The condition of lakhs of farmers queuing in the market has become pitiable. The price of cotton is Rs. 1100 per quintal. The per acre cotton yield is 4.95 quintal while Rs. 5000 are spent on fertilizers, seeds and pesticides on one acre-crop. It means that the farmers are selling cotton at throw away prices. The farmers sell their product at a very cheap rate in the market but once it is purchased by the traders and stored in the godowns, the price becomes just double, just as the wheat was sold by the farmers in April at the rate of Rs. 400 per quintal and now, it is being sold at the rate of Rs. 900 per quintal. It is nothing but exploitation of farmers and labourers.

Sir, our hon. Prime Minister get it advertised through big banners, radio and doordarshan that he is a farmer's son but the farmers are being exploited at present in such a way. One can well imagine through it, what will be happening in the remaining parts of the country. In the end, I earnestly request the Governmet to raise the cotton price immediately to the tune of Rs. 2500 per quintal and take steps to purchase it from the farmers otherwise the anger of the farmers may take a serious turn for which the Government will be held responsible.

Sir, it was published in yesterday's and day before yesterday's daily 'Punjab Kesri' as to what were the rates of cotton and wheat and how the farmers are being exploited.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR (Begu Sarai) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Government to South Karnapur Coal field of Bihar. South Karnapura coal field is located in Bihar in which there are three collieries, Argadda, Barkakana and Syao under Central coal field; South Karnapura coal field has 435 million metric tonnes of high grade i.e. A,B and C grade coal and 448 million metric tonnes of low grade coal. In lack on advance techniques of mining the coal during the years 1994-95 and 1995-96, it suffered a loss of Rs. 135 crore and Rs. 122 crore respectively. 24000 workers are employed in this coal field. The coal fields of Bihar are thicksin and there is no technique in our country for thicksin mining. Therefore, some experts from other countries were called for thicksin mining but they also failed in their job.

Sir, the need of the hour is to develop this coal field and to bring the lossmaking coalfields out of red and to ensure that 24000 workers are not rendred jobless. Therefore an advertisement should be released on large scale. Previously, Bharat Coaking Coal Limited had to face the same problem. A new technology in the form of open cast mining has been developed there. I would like to urge upon the Government, specially the hon. Minister of coal to hold talks with the Ministry of Coal and trade union on the problem of South Karnapura coal field of Coal Industry and find out any solution.

SHRI MANOJ KUMAR SINHA (Ghazipur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, through you, to the issue mentioned by Shri Brij Bhushan Tiwari that the entire eastern Uttar Pradesh is reeling under serious shortage of D.A.P. chemical fertilizer at present. Due to blackmarketting prevalent in that area, there is unavailability of di-amonia phosphate in all the Government godowns of Uttar Pradesh. The sowing of Rabi is at its peak in the state. I, through you, request the Government to make immediate arrangements in this regard. The local authorities have told that due to shortage of rail-wagons, D.A.P. chemical fertilizer is not being obtained. I would also like to request the hon. Minister of Railways, present in the House, to instruct the Railway authorities in this regard. Keeping in view the peak season of rabi season's sowing, immediate arrangements should be made for availability of Railway wagons so that availability of Railway wagons so that availability of D.A.P. fertilizer can be ensured.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, since the leader of the House the hon. Minister of Railways is present in the House, I want to deliver my speech in Hindi, I want to say something on problem of Kerala.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : But the speech should not be long.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : I am speaking in Hindi.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Alright, it should not be long in Hindi also.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways had called a meeting of the hon. Members hailing from Kerala in which he had given assurance to us but no effort has been made so far to fulfil those assurances. There are 17 Railway Zones in the Country. 6 new Zones have been set up. We had demanded one for Kerala and were optimistic that he would accept it but he overlooked Kerala. In this regard all the Members hailing from Kerala have given a memorandum to the hon. Minister of Railways. We have to go to Madras for every work related to railway. Previously he had given assurance to set up Chief Engineer's office at Kochin but it could not be implemented. A notification was also issued in this regard but that too was cancelled. All the programmes pertaining to Railway are being implemented in Kerala with a snail's speed. The fund is allocated in every

budget for Kerala but that is not ·pent there. They always look towards Madras and Tamil. ·lu. The officers looking after the gauge conversion or doubling work be they from Madras or Bangalore, do not pay attention to our problems. Nobody works for early implementation of the said assurances. We had demanded for westcoast Railway zone in Kerala. The hon. Minister should pay attention to it.

At present, a new Railway zone has been opened in almost every State but Kerala has been singled out. If the development activities of Kerala have to be run properly, one Railway zone should be opened in Kerala. I, through you, demand the hon. Minister of the Railways to consider our demands and fulfil the promise made to us...*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister of Railways is prepared to speek; please give him a chance...*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : I am not preventing anyone from speaking.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down...

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, he will speak only after you allow him to speak...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Why do you not sit down? Sit down, please. Allow him to speak.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. CHACKO (Mukundapuram) : He wants to speak...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, One Chief Engineer's Office in Ernakulam was sanctioned in 1991. But it has not been started yet. The proposal has not been implemented. It should be implemented ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He has agreed with you...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all I thank him for speaking so good Hindi. So far as the question of zone is concerned, the hon'ble member knows that nine zones were already there, six zones were set up after 33 years. Therefore, it is not possible to set up zone.

You have spoken about the office of the Chief Engineer. Yesterday, you have given it in writing also. We are looking into it. Secondly, supplementary budget of railways is going to be introduced soon. You have spoken about short-route and doubling of railway track, which is your general issue. We have already accepted that. So far as your charge of slow-work is concerned, I assure you that it will not be slow at any rate. In case of doubling of track, I would like to say that the Railways are also interested in this work as you are because it is a matter of profit for the Railways itself. Therefore, the question of neglecting the South or Kerala does not arise. The Railways budget is going to be introduced soon. In that budget we shall discuss all aspects in details and reply to each and every point.

[English]

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN (Quilon) : Respected Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for having given me an opportunity to raise a matter of urgent public importance regarding the cashew workers in Kerala. Out of the total 4,26,000 workers covered under the ESI Scheme in Kerala, 1,25,000 belong to the cashew sector. The cashew industry is now facing a severe crisis due to multifarious reason. First, it is because of the lack fo raw cashewnuts and also the steadily increasing price of raw cashewnuts. Dur to this reason, the number of working days is declining from year to year. In order to meet the situation, in the year 1989, a Special Scheme has been enacted which is named as the ESI Cashew Workers Scheme. Under this Scheme, disregard of the attendance of the workers, the ESI benefit has been given to these workers. But it is quite surprising to note that the ESI Corporation in its meeting held on 5.10.1996 has arbitrarily decided to stop, to discontinue the ESI Special Scheme. About 35,000 to 40,000 cashew workers are benefited by this Scheme. The ESI Corporation has decided to discontinue the Scheme with effect from 30.10.1996.

So, I urge upon the Minister of Labour to reconsider this decision, review this decision and revive the Scheme at the earliest Also, I would like to submit and I would like to draw the attention of the Labour Minister to the fact that 95 per cent of the cashew workers are women. The women workers also belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. Considering the special circumstance and the nature of work which they are doing, they are subjected to so many diseases. Further, the number of working days is very less due to a number of reasons which are beyond the control of the workers. They were getting the benefit and also they are living below the povertyline. But they are now denied the right of the benefit of the ESI Scheme.

So, I urge upon the Government and the Minister of Labour to consider it as a special case. Disregard of the attendance in which they are working, they should be given the benefit of the ESI Scheme. Considering the fact that they are coming under the poverty line, about 35,000 to 40,000 workers were benefited by this Scheme. So, I once again urge upon the Minister of Labour to reconsider the decision taken on 5.10.96 to discontinue the scheme from 30.9.1996.